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ABSTRACT

Weaknesses are apparent in two very popular informal reading comprehension measures. The Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) tests comprehension through questions only, while the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) is too cumbersome for the average classroom instructor to administer. Since both measures offer instructors ways of collecting data, they may effectively be merged into an Informal Reading Assessment Inventory (IRAI), bringing together processes from both inventories. The oral reading component of the IRAI may be used to check learners' reading behaviors, such as recall of material via retelling, language usage, and recoding. The silent reading component allows learners the private opportunity to interact with written material during an uninterrupted period of time and to present understanding of the material through predetermined criteria in a predetermined manner. The following guidelines are suggested for preparing and administering the IRAI: (1) select several types of materials for oral reading, long enough to elicit at least 25 oral miscues; (2) compute the readability of the selections using at least two formulas; (3) devise criteria for evaluation; (4) prepare a script for miscue coding; (5) have a cassette tape player available; (6) establish rapport with the learner; (7) have the learner read an entire selection aloud, while coding miscues, taping the reading if necessary; (8) have the learner respond to comprehension criteria; and (9) administer the silent reading comprehension measure using selections of 450-500 words. (HTH)

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The Informal Reading Assessment Inventory*

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Presently, instructors may select from a number of informal measures that are used to approximate learners' reading behaviors. Concerns about these measures are related to the data that are gathered when these measures are used. Of specific concern is the manner in which the data are collected and interpreted. Weaknesses that are apparent in two very popular measures, the Informal Reading Inventory and the Reading Miscue Inventory (Goodman and Burke 1972), are: the Informal Reading Inventory tests for phonic skills and comprehension through questions only; the Reading Miscue Inventory is too cumbersome for the average classroom instructor to administer. Since both measures do offer instructors ways of collecting data, they may effectively be merged into an Informal Reading Assessment Inventory.

Discussion

The Informal Reading Assessment Inventory (IRAI) brings together processes from the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) and the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI). IRAI has an oral reading component and a silent reading component. The oral reading component may be used to check learners' reading behaviors, e.g., memory of material via retelling, language usage during retelling, and recoding. The silent reading component allows learners the private opportunity of interacting with written material during an uninterrupted period of time and presenting understanding of the material through pre-determined criteria in a pre-determined manner. Pre-determined criteria may be questions to be answered and/or problems to be solved from the material. This pre-determined manner may be writing answers to questions, talking to someone about what was read or manipulating parts of an item to present a concept.

General likenesses and differences between the oral reading section of the IRAI and the oral reading section of the IRI may be observed through the steps presented in Figure 1 (Scales 1978).

The silent reading parts of the IRAI and the IRI are about the same as for the oral reading parts. Exceptions are noted in steps three and four of the Process for

Figure 1
Oral Sections of IRAI and IRI.

IRAI (Oral Section)	IRI (Oral Section)
1. Materials are selected from *several* areas.	1. Materials are selected from *one* area.
2. Criteria for evaluation is determined, e.g., questions are devised, directions for presenting concepts are developed.	2. Questions are devised.

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Figure 1 (continued)

3. Learner reads orally and instructor codes miscues.	3. Learner reads orally and instructor codes errors.
4. Learner responds to criteria devised to elicit understanding of material read, e.g., retelling, manipulating items, drawing maps.	4. Learner responds to questions.
5. Instructor both quantitatively and qualitatively evaluates responses to criteria and estimates the manner in which the reading process functioned during the reading of the material.	5. Instructor marks questions right or wrong and determines an approximate reading level for learner.

Note: The word Reading had been added to this measure since its presentation in 1978.

Administering IRAI. Instead of reading orally the learner will read silently for both IRAI and IRI. While the IRI generally focuses on responding to questions and occasionally retelling, the IRAI always makes use of responding to questions, retelling and an additional element — performing tasks to demonstrate understanding of material read (Scales 1978).

As presented, parts of the IRAI overlap with the IRI and reach into the RMI (Scales 1979). Hence, there is a combining of some elements from existing techniques plus additional elements.

The following guidelines are suggested for preparing and administering the IRAI.

Preparing to Administer the IRAI

1. Select several types of materials for oral and silent reading. Materials should be new to the learner and be above as well as on par with the learner's reading level. The instructor should select *two* entire selections from materials such as those suggested below. (Make selections from the mid-sections of the books and use one selection for oral reading and the other for silent reading.) Selections should be long enough to elicit at least 25 miscues. Ignore the first 5 and use the final 20 for analysis purposes.

   1.1 Content area (two selections per book)
   1.2 Recreational (two selections per item)
   1.3 Reading instructional text (two selections per book)
   1.4 Other materials (two selections per item)

2. Compute the readability of the selections and record. (Use at least two formulas.)

3. Devise criteria for evaluation.

   3.1 Suggested methods are: demonstrations/applied, retelling, manipulating, responding to at least three different types of questions.
   3.2 Select at least two different methods for each type of material selected and determine reporting and recording techniques for information that will be gathered.

4. Prepare script for miscue coding.

5. Have a cassette player and tape available if necessary.

Process for Administering IRAI

1. The instructor should establish

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rapport with the learner.

2. The instructor and learner should be seated in an area where interruptions will not occur.

3. The learner should be asked to read an entire selection orally and be informed of the fact that the instructor would like her/him to respond to comprehension criteria after she/he has read the passage.

4. While the learner is reading orally, the instructor should code miscues. If it becomes apparent early in the reading selection that the learner is not going to make enough miscues, the instructor should switch to a more difficult selection. Also, the instructor should turn on the cassette recorder if necessary.

5. When the learner completes the selection, the instructor should ask the learner to respond to the comprehension criteria.

6. Since oral reading is not always the best measure of comprehension for many learners, a silent reading measure must also be administered. Steps one, two and four above should be followed during this silent reading except that the learner should be asked to read silently in lieu of orally and the reading selection may be shorter, i.e., 450 to 500 words may be sufficient.

7. Utilize the following miscue form format to record and analyze the oral reading data. Report those data and the comprehension criteria data, as well as the data collected from the silent reading comprehension criteria.

Figure 2
Miscue Form

Text	Reader	Self Corrects	Graphic Similarity	Maintained Meaning	Altered Meaning
1. lamp	light	x	—	—	—
2. difficult	different	—	x	—	x
3. rubberband	gumband	—	—	x	—
4. the	a	—	—	x	—

References

1 Goodman, Yetta M. and Carolyn L. Burke. *Reading miscue inventory manual.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1972.

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